

HONORING ERVIN'S ALL-AMERICAN YOUTH CLUB, INC. OF CLEARWATER

**HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 22, 1999*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Ervin's All-American Youth Club, Inc., an organization which is having a positive influence on hundreds of Ninth District residents in the North Greenwood neighborhood of Clearwater.

Ervin's All-American Youth Club, Inc. has been changing lives since 1981, when Mr. Ervin Ajamu Babalola realized that something had to be done to help the next generation of children in Clearwater. With only his backyard and plenty of energy and ideas, Mr. Babalola began to develop positive programs for at-risk youth to prevent them from becoming involved in negative behavior. The club has grown tremendously and is now housed at Ervin's Community Enrichment Center.

On June 26, Ervin's All-American Youth Club, Inc. will celebrate its 18th year of focusing on solutions to the problems in its community rather than on the problems. Ervin's quality services encourage self-sufficiency and self-empowerment for the many African American youth and families in the community. Mr. Babalola's achievements have been recognized by the City of Clearwater, the Clearwater Times, and our local Fox television affiliate. In addition, the Florida Department of Corrections presented Mr. Babalola and Ervin's All-American Youth Club, Inc. with Harry K. Singletary, Jr. Crime Prevention Awards.

Ervin's All-American Youth Club, Inc. offers a wide variety of important and valuable programs to the community including:

A community food pantry, which distributes food to community residents through its Community Food Pantry.

The Generations Program, which is an adopt-a-grandparent program to enable seniors to participate in community service with youth.

A youth employment program during the summer for children ages 10-15.

An After School Enrichment Program, which provides homework and tutoring assistance provided by Pinellas County School volunteers, tutors, staff and certified teachers. A computer center is available along with other resources to help develop healthy attitudes and build self-esteem.

The Dream Builders Academy, which incorporates the Rites of Passage program, develops family bonding, educational experiences and self-image enhancement.

The Youth Empowerment Project, a youth leadership program that motivates at-risk youth and adults to develop their vocational and entrepreneurial skills in business.

Camp Nguzo Saba, a camp for children ages 5-13 designed to develop learning, belonging and contributing in youth.

The SANKOFA Community Theater, which promotes the development and growth of amateur theater and the amateur performing arts in the North Greenwood community.

The Youth Academy of Entrepreneurship, a partnership program which introduces and fosters the entrepreneurial development of youth ages 8-18 from all social, racial, ethnic and national backgrounds.

In addition to all of these worthy initiatives, Ervin's All-American Youth Club, Inc. provides: assistance and referral services for individual and family needs, positive role models who share their experiences and wisdom with youth, field trips, supervised recreation, and participation in the National African American Male Collaboration, an innovative grass roots effort to help men and boys reach their fullest potential.

Ervin's All-American Youth Club, Inc. deserves to be recognized for fulfilling its goal of providing a clean and wholesome environment for the youth and families of Pinellas County, so they may grow and become more productive citizens of the community. Indeed, Mr. Babalola's organization has had such a positive impact that many area youth have gone on to college, joined the work force or elected to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States.

I want to publicly commend Mr. Babalola and the members of his family for their dedicated service on behalf of the youth of North Greenwood and for their outreach programs which have helped provide direction and positive growth for many in the Clearwater community.

JOY OF BEING A FATHER

**HON. HENRY J. HYDE**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 22, 1999*

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, Father's Day brought lots of memories and warm thoughts to all of us. One very special person I know named Philip H. Corboy had a bittersweet Father's Day which was beautifully acknowledged by Steve Neal of the Chicago Sun-Times on Friday, June 18th. Phil and I went all through school together, from grammar and high school through Law school, and have remained close friends ever since.

Steve Neal is a highly respected political analyst and journalist who shares my admiration and respect for Phil Corboy.

I suggest my colleagues read Mr. Neal's column about this extraordinary man.

JOY OF BEING A FATHER SUMMED UP IN  
EULOGY

He has made a career out of rising to the challenge.

Philip H. Corboy, one of the nation's more accomplished trial lawyers, has effectively represented seriously injured people for a half century. His law firm has won hundreds of settlements or verdicts worth more than \$1 million each. He once negotiated a \$25 million settlement for plaintiffs in a case involving the crash of a DC-10. Corboy is former chairman of the American Bar Association's litigation unit and a former president of the Chicago Bar Association. He is among President Clinton's staunchest political allies and is the former general counsel of the Illinois Democratic Party.

But for all his achievements, the snow-haired Corboy takes more pride in the ac-

complishments of his children. He was dealt a most devastating blow in 1976 when his 12-year-old son Robert was killed in an automobile accident. Then last winter, tragedy struck again. Circuit Judge Joan Marie Corboy, the lawyer's only daughter, died in another accident.

There is nothing more painful or difficult for any parent to endure. But Corboy responded to this challenge with a deeply moving tribute to his daughter. On this Father's Day weekend, Corboy's eulogy carries special significance and reminds us that parenthood is the greatest gift.

"She was outspoken, intelligent and fun," Corboy told more than 1,500 people at Joan Marie's memorial service in Northwestern University's law school auditorium. "As a young girl, she held her own in a house full of boys. The truth of the matter is, she ruled the roost."

"Joan was not one to mince words. Whenever I had the opportunity, and it was often, I would tell her that a lawyer who appeared before her had told me what a good judge she was, how fair, how smart, how judicious. Ever the practicalist, she would reply, 'Well, Dad, if he—and it was most times as he—thought I was an inept horse's rear, do you think he would have told you that?'"

"Once when she was a prosecutor, a judge convened his call by asking Joan, 'Are you ready, sweetie?' To which Joan replied, 'Only if you are, Judge.'"

"Joan was true to herself and she was full of self-confidence. Some time after Joan and Jim married, she was asked why she kept her father's name. To which she replied, 'I didn't keep my father's name, I kept my name.'"

In dealing with the most haunting question of why she died, Corboy said, "I gently and reverently suggest that tragic accidents are not God's plan. There is no intentional taking of young people from their husband and children, their parents and siblings."

Corboy then talked about the meaning of his daughter's life. "What has she taught us in 46 years? That's an easy one. She taught us to respect others, and she taught us how to love. Let me remind you, my sons, that many millions of people have never had a sister. Many millions of fathers and mothers have never had a daughter . . . many millions of people have never had children. . . . We have been fortunate in having the loving, beautiful, smart, strong Joan Marie Corboy with us for the better part of our lives."

He concluded: "Do not think of Joan Marie Corboy as a memory. Think of her spirit and carry her spirit and her love of life in your hearts forever."

In his loss, Corboy has something in common with famed Kansas editor William Allen White, whose only daughter, Mary Katherine, was killed in a 1921 horseback riding accident. Like Joan Corboy, Mary White had a passion for life and a democratic spirit. White wrote a wonderful tribute that was widely reprinted. "I cannot help feeling that her life has reached out and touched other lives through this article, and I hope it has touched them for good," White wrote in a letter to an old college friend.

"Mary was a joyous child. We can't think of her for five minutes consecutively without breaking into a laugh," White went on. "And you can't go around weeping your eyes out and laughing at the same time. We have to laugh if we think of Mary, and we love to think of Mary."

Joan Corboy will be long remembered for the same reasons. When students once asked how she got her job, she replied, "I'm a judge because my father has a lot of clout." But she also was highly qualified and had special grace.